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## Young Black Soldier Hailed a Hero in Fort Hood Shooting

By Gordon Jackson  
Special to the NNPA from the Dallas Weekly

DALLAS (NNPA) - If there are any genuine positives that can come from a tragedy like the shootings in Fort Hood, Texas early this month, it's that heroes can arise from the turmoil and chaos. There were several at the Fort Hood army post, including Private First Class Marquest Smith, a 21-year old soldier from Fort Worth.

Several sources account Smith's heroic actions, starting around 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 5. That's when Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, later to be discovered as a disgruntled and despondent staff psychiatrist, further unhappy about his own scheduled deployment to the Middle East, pulled two guns and fired several rounds inside a crowded room at the Fort Hood's Soldier Readiness Center, the place where soldiers complete their paperwork and medical checkups before being deployed either to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Fort Hood, one of the largest military bases in the world, housing close to 40,000 soldiers, has also deployed more of them to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than any other base. That's why Smith was in the building, taking care of final details and getting ready for his own deployment to Afghanistan in January. He expected to be attacked in the war zone, but never at his home base.

"I never thought something like this could happen. I thought it was a dream," Smith would later tell a horde of reporters. "I didn't know what was going on until I heard yelling and moaning."

Several reports account that when the shooting started, Smith first helped one of the clerks in the building to hide under a desk, then bravely went into the line of fire and pulled two of the wounded to outside of the building.

Instead of staying outside, however, Smith heard cries of help from people inside and could not ignore their calls. Smith reportedly went back inside to rescue two more.

Smith tried to make as smart moves as possible under the bullet barrage, waiting until Hasan would have either ran out of ammunition or paused to change rounds in his weapons. Nevertheless, on his way out for the last time, the gunman spotted and shot at Smith, but missed.

"I could hear the bullets go past my head and hit the wall," Smith said. Once outside for good, Smith helped the wounded into a pickup truck and drove them to a local hospital. Only after the shooting stopped did Smith realize that he had actually taken a bullet that hit the heel of his boot. He expressed mixed feelings from fear to anger, especially when he learned that the gunman was also a soldier.

"I'm really hurt. We're supposed to be a family," Smith said. Thirteen soldiers and civilians were killed and over 30 wounded in the shooting, which lasted a span of about 10 minutes. It was the worst mass shooting at an American military base in history. Hasan sustained four gun shot wounds from a quickly reacting Sgt. Kimberly Munley, a civilian Fort Hood police officer. Hasan was apprehended and taken to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Early reports said that Hasan had died from the shots. It was later corrected that he lived.

President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and several high-level military dignitaries attended the memorial service for the fallen soldiers at Fort Hood on Nov. 10.



In this file photograph, Mrs. Mary Clyburn Hooks and Ms. Virginia Williams, two of the Royal Seven, hold marker that is to be placed. (Photo By Lawson)

## Royal Sit-In Historical Marker To Be Placed, Unveiled On Sunday, November 29, at 3 p.m.

The formal placement and unveiling of the historic marker commemorating the 1957 anti-segregation "sit-in" at the former Royal Ice Cream Parlor will take place at 3 p.m. on Sun., Nov. 29, at the corner of North Roxboro and Dowd streets in Durham.

This marker documents the 1957 "sit-in" and the subsequent legal actions which helped to dismantle racial segregation. The marker was first proposed by Durham resident, R. Kelly Bryant, and was officially approved by the North Carolina Historical Marker Advisory Commission in December of 2007.

In advance of the state's approval, a community campaign of support was offered by a broad coalition of elected officials, neighborhood associations, civic groups, and media editorial boards in Durham and the Piedmont Area.

After the approval, the marker was crafted at a foundry and delivered to Durham. A dedication program was held in June of 2008 at the Union Baptist Church. However, since construction was underway for the Union Independent School at that time, officials at the state Archives and History department suggested that the formal placement of the marker be delayed until the recent completion of the building.

The placement and unveiling program on Sunday, November 29 will last for only about 45 minutes. However, this "community unveiling" will have a significant 21st Century symbolism.

In addition to Ms. Virginia Williams, who was one of the young adults arrested for "sitting-in" at the Royal Ice Cream Parlor, a member of the Coletta family, which co-owned the Royal, has agreed to help with the unveiling.

This multi-cultural display of cooperation, respect, and unity will send a strong message about the racial progress that has been experienced over the past half century in Durham, in North Carolina, and across the United States of America.

## Marshal in Rockwell print gets Kentucky hometown honor

By Gina Kinslow

GLASGOW, Ky. (AP) - The Norman Rockwell print titled "The Problem We All Must Live With" features a small, black girl walking between four very tall men.

The little girl was Ruby Nell Bridges, the first black student to attend a white school in New Orleans, in 1960.

The legs of the man on the far right side walking behind Bridges belong to Jesse Grider, one of four U.S. marshals ordered to escort the kindergartner and her family the five blocks from their home to the William Frantz School.

Grider is originally from Glasgow and on Veteran's Day he was honored for his service as a U.S. Marshal and with a Kentucky National Guard unit during the Korean War in a special ceremony at the South Central Kentucky Cultural Center.

"It's quite an honor. I think I told someone I've been recognized by about three attorney generals in the United States and the president of the United States, but this means as much to me as any of them. This is my hometown and always will be," he said.

Since that day in New Orleans, Grider has been back to visit with Bridges twice.

"I went back to see her maybe 15 years ago. A U.S. attorney in New Orleans called me and wanted to know if I would come back and meet with her and I did," he said.

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## As Hunger Increases Across the Nation, So Do Helping Hands

By Pharon Martin  
NNPA National Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - As a new USDA report finds that more than a quarter of all African-American households suffered from food insecurity last year, compared to 15 percent of White households, public and private agencies are scrambling to help feed those who might otherwise go hungry.

"Our agencies are reporting seeing increases from 30 to over 100 percent in the demand for food assistance and are reporting longer lines, seeing new faces and the need to reduce the amount of food being given to each family so that everyone gets something," said Shamia K. Holloway, spokesperson for Capital Area Food Bank, a Washington-based free food distributor. "The economic crisis has touched so many people in unexpected ways; and it puts a squeeze on those already struggling individuals and families. We expect to see more people this year."

The face of hunger is changing, Holloway said that her organization has received calls from former donors and volunteers who are finding they need assistance from the very organization they used to support. More than 49 million people lived in food deficient households last year. Nearly 27 percent of African-American and 27 percent of Hispanic households had food deficiencies, compared to 10.7 percent of White households. Food insecurities among African-American households grew by 17.7 percent from 2007 to 2008 and 35.3 percent for Hispanic households, according to the USDA.

African-American and Hispanic households were roughly two and one-half times as likely to be food-deficient as White households. The overall increase of food deficient households from 2007 is the largest one-year increase since the USDA first began publishing its annual data.

Food deficient or "food insecure" households are defined as those in which "the household has multiple indications of food access problems impacting at least one but not necessarily all members of the household." "The faces that we're seeing coming through our door are the same faces that we have seen previously - only more," said Roxanne Rice, executive director for Food for Others, Northern Virginia's largest non-profit distributor of free food to the needy. "We see young families with children and the working poor or who had part-time work previously but were laid-off or lost their jobs completely, and they are coming to us for a little bit of help."

They are seeing increased numbers over last year, which was a record year for the food banks. The area that Food for Others serves is one of the wealthiest regions in the country yet it still suffers a 5 percent poverty rate, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

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## Mississippi Governor's Plan to Merge Three HBCUs Come Under Fire

By Dominique M. Grant

SPECIAL TO THE NNPA FROM THE MISSISSIPPI LINK  
JACKSON, Miss. (NNPA) - Dozens of students, members of the NAACP, alumni and concerned constituents gathered in a "rally" at the Mississippi State Capitol last Friday to protest Gov. Haley Barbour's proposal to merge Mississippi's three historically Black universities.

Barbour has proposed merging Mississippi Valley State University and Alcorn State into Jackson State University. Outraged, students from each of the respective universities gathered on the steps of the State Capitol to let their voices be heard.

"Education is an economic equalizer," said Othor Cain, Jackson State University NAACP adviser. "If the governor is serious about fiscal responsibility, he should understand that students need a quality education in order to rise out of poverty."

A crowd of students attended the state College Board meeting last Thursday expecting a discussion about the proposal, but there was none. Barbour also has said he wants to consolidate Mississippi University for Women with Mississippi State. Under his plan, no campuses would close.

The governor said the restructuring could save the state \$35 million off a nearly \$5.5 billion budget. The proposed change would leave Mississippi with five public universities rather than the current eight. Barbour's consolidation proposal would have to be approved by lawmakers. It is part of his suggested budget for the fiscal year that begins next July 1.

Some Alcorn State University alumni called the governor's recommendation to merge the college with Jackson State University devastating. Lawmakers would have to approve the governor's plan to merge the schools before it happens. The governor said the plan may not be popular, but it's necessary to help balance the 2011 budget as revenues continue to fall. "It would be like stripping us of part of our culture and our heritage and our camaraderie," said Alcorn graduate John Smith.

The governor's office said it's too early to say if the school's names will change, but they will all be run by Jackson State's president. Also the sports teams at Alcorn and Mississippi Valley would be disbanded with JSU's athletic program remaining.

Opponents of the merger have created a website that has updates and an online petition. For more information visit [www.savemshbcus.org](http://www.savemshbcus.org)